

# RACE TO THE TOP

## Louisiana Report

Year 2: December 2012–December 2013

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U.S. Department of Education  
Washington, DC 20202

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June 2014

# Executive Summary

## Race to the Top overview

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. ARRA provided \$4.35 billion for the Race to the Top fund, of which approximately \$4 billion was used to fund comprehensive statewide reform grants under the Race to the Top program.<sup>1</sup> In 2010, the U.S. Department of Education (Department) awarded Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 grants to 11 States and the District of Columbia. The Race to the Top program is a competitive four-year grant program designed to encourage and reward States that are creating the conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including making substantial gains in student achievement, closing achievement gaps, and improving high school graduation rates; and ensuring students are prepared for success in college and careers. Since the Race to the Top Phase 1 and 2 competitions, the Department has made additional grants under the Race to the Top Phase 3, Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge,<sup>2</sup> and Race to the Top – District<sup>3</sup> competitions.

In 2011, the Department awarded Phase 3 grants to seven additional States, which were finalists in the Race to the Top Phase 1 and Phase 2 competitions. Race to the Top Phase 3 focuses on supporting efforts to leverage comprehensive statewide reform, while also improving science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education.

The Race to the Top program is built on the framework of comprehensive reform in four education reform areas:

- Adopting rigorous standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and the workplace;
- Building data systems that measure student success and inform teachers and principals how they can improve their practices;
- Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; and
- Turning around the lowest-performing schools.

Since education is a complex system, sustained and lasting instructional improvement in classrooms, schools, local educational agencies (LEAs), and States will not be achieved through piecemeal change. Race to the Top requires that States and LEAs participating in the State's Race to the Top plan (participating LEAs)<sup>4</sup> take into account their local context to design and implement the most effective and innovative approaches that meet the needs of their educators, students, and families.

## Race to the Top program review

As part of the Department's commitment to supporting States as they implement ambitious reform agendas, the Department established the Implementation and Support Unit (ISU) in the Office of the Deputy Secretary to administer, among others, the Race to the Top program. The goal of the ISU is to provide assistance to States as they implement unprecedented and comprehensive reforms to improve student outcomes. Consistent with this goal, the Department has developed a Race to the Top program review process that not only addresses the Department's responsibilities for fiscal and programmatic oversight, but is also designed to identify areas in which Race to the Top grantees need assistance and support to meet their goals. Specifically, the ISU works with Race to the Top grantees to differentiate support based on individual State needs, and helps States work with each other and with experts to achieve and sustain educational reforms that improve student outcomes. In partnership with the ISU, the Reform Support Network (RSN) offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to Race to the Top grantees. The RSN's purpose is to support Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other, and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.

Grantees are accountable for the implementation of their approved Race to the Top plans, and the information and data gathered throughout the program review help to inform the Department's management and support of the Race to the Top grantees, as well as provide appropriate and timely updates to the public on their progress. In the event that adjustments are required to an approved plan, the grantee must submit a formal amendment request to the Department for consideration. States may submit for Department approval amendment requests to a plan and budget, provided such changes do not significantly affect the scope or objectives of the approved plans. In the event that the Department determines that a grantee is not meeting its goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets, or is not fulfilling other applicable requirements, the Department will take appropriate enforcement action(s), consistent with 34 CFR section 80.43 in the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR).<sup>5</sup>

## State-specific summary report

The Department uses the information gathered during the review process (e.g., through monthly calls, onsite reviews, and Annual Performance Reports (APRs) to draft State-specific summary reports).<sup>6</sup> The State-specific summary report serves as an assessment of a State's annual Race to the Top implementation. The Year 2 report for Phase 3 grantees highlights successes and accomplishments, identifies challenges, and provides lessons learned from implementation from approximately December 2012 through December 2013.

<sup>1</sup> The remaining funds were awarded under the Race to the Top Assessment program. More information about the Race to the Top Assessment program is available at [www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment](http://www.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-assessment).

<sup>2</sup> More information on the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/index.html>.

<sup>3</sup> More information on Race to the Top – District can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-district/index.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Participating local educational agencies (LEAs) are those LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's Memorandum of Understanding with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

<sup>5</sup> More information about the Implementation and Support Unit's (ISU's) program review process, State Annual Performance Report (APR) data, and State Scopes of Work can be found at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/index.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Additional State-specific data on progress against annual performance measures and goals reported in the Year 2 APRs can be found on the Race to the Top Data Display at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

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## State's education reform agenda<sup>7</sup>

Louisiana's strategy to dramatically increase student achievement is to ensure that every child is taught by an effective teacher and every teacher is supported by an effective leader. *Louisiana Believes* serves as the State's comprehensive reform plan with an objective of ensuring that all students are college- or career-ready. *Louisiana Believes* has three components that focus investments on students, educators, and families and uses policies, programs, and practice along with new activities, supports, and strategies to: (1) raise basic expectations for students and schools; (2) provide educators with tools to teach, hold educators accountable for student achievement and empower educators to make decisions that support student achievement; and (3) engage families and provide them with options to support their child's needs. The State's Race to the Top plan aligns with *Louisiana Believes* and focuses on: building LEA capacity to implement Compass, the teacher and principal evaluation system; supporting the transition to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS); adding content and functions to State's Enhanced Assessment of Grade-Level Expectations<sup>8</sup> (EAGLE) functions and contents; and expanding the number of charter schools and Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

The State has 124 LEAs and 1,424 schools. Of the State's more than 673,000 students, some 69 percent live in poverty. Louisiana has made some encouraging progress in improving student outcomes with reforms addressing standards and assessments, improving data collection and use, turning around chronically low-achieving schools, and supporting teachers and leaders.

Louisiana was awarded \$17,442,972 to support its Race to the Top plan with half of those funds, \$8,692,972, allocated directly to the 47 LEAs that opted to participate in the State's Race to the Top project.

## Year 1 summary

In Year 1, the State created five Network Support Teams.<sup>9</sup> The Network Support Teams support and increase the capacity of LEAs to implement and sustain education reform. Network Support Teams served as the direct lines of communication between LEAs and the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE). During the first year of the grant the Network Support Teams provided technical assistance, resources, and training to support LEAs' implementation of the CCSS and the transition to the new teacher and principal evaluation system, Compass. LDOE and Network Support Teams also provided training to teachers and principals to support their use of EAGLE and with contract support, the State added test items and resources to EAGLE. The State also

launched a new registration platform, Course Choice, for its online courses. LDOE provide training to administrators across the State on Act 1<sup>10</sup> and guidance as LEAs revised personnel policies compliant with Act 1. Finally, the State issued a request for new charter schools and, after a review by an independent reviewer, awarded Race to the Top funds to support six charter schools.

## Year 2 summary

With Race to the Top funds at work in all components of *Louisiana Believes*, the State's 2013 annual report includes progress on many goals shared with Race to the Top, including increases in the cohort graduation rate as well as increases in the percentages of students arriving in fourth and ninth grade "on-time and on-level," which is considered passing LEAP, the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics State assessment administered in fourth and eighth grade respectively. The State amended its Race to the Top plan to accelerate its support of new charter schools.

In Year 2, Louisiana continued to use the five Network Support Teams to provide support to LEAs. The Network Support Teams supported the statewide implementation of the new teacher and principal evaluation system, Compass, as well as the transition to the CCSS. In Year 2, Network Support Teams became a critical mechanism to support LDOE's communication to the field and served as a vehicle for providing feedback from the field to LDOE. Other accomplishments cited by the State include the release of online teacher and leader resources and tools to support CCSS implementation and assisting 90 percent of its LEAs in becoming compliant with Act 1. The State also added over 1,400 mathematics and ELA items to the EAGLE item bank, allowing teachers to create classroom specific formative assessments.

## Looking ahead to Year 3

In Year 3, consistent with its Race to the Top plan, the State's District Support Office intends to continue to use the Network Support Teams as the primary vehicle for communicating and providing technical assistance to LEAs. The State plans to focus on adding resources and materials to the toolbox to support CCSS implementation. A second area of focus will be increasing teachers' use of the EAGLE system, especially its reporting function to improve classroom instruction. The State plans to continue to increase the number of high-quality AP courses by recruiting and monitoring virtual course providers as well as by providing educators and administrators with professional development and support to develop and offer

<sup>7</sup> This section reflects counts of schools and students reported in the State's Phase 3 application.

<sup>8</sup> Enhanced Assessment of Grade-Level Expectations (EAGLE) is the State's online instructional improvement system which includes a formative assessment component, an item bank of various items and questions for kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12), and a content assessment reporting system.

<sup>9</sup> In Year 1, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) initially proposed to use its Trailblazer initiative framework to implement some components of its Race to the Top plan. The initiative included LEAs committed to working with the District Support Office to enact deep-level reforms aimed to boost student performance. With the adoption of *Louisiana Believes*, the State amended its plan to use Network Support Teams instead of the Trailblazer initiative to implement its Race to the Top plan.

<sup>10</sup> Act 1 allows districts and schools to use measures of teacher effectiveness to guide personnel policies and decisions and calls for teachers to be compensated based on experience, demand (locally defined and inclusive of certification area, geography, etc.) and effectiveness, without decreasing any teacher's salary or affecting retirement. The statute preserves tenure for current teachers, except the small number who earn an "ineffective" rating. For more information, <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/teaching/act-1-legislative-memo.pdf?sfvrsn=2>.

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AP courses in traditional classrooms. With two years of teacher and principal evaluation data, the State will be poised to follow through with plans to identify effective teachers and leaders and ensure their equitable distribution across high-poverty and high-minority schools.

Finally, LDOE plans to continue to provide oversight and guidance to charter schools opened in school year (SY) 2013-2014 and those preparing to open in SY 2014-2015.

## State Success Factors

### Building strong statewide capacity to implement, scale up, and sustain proposed plans

To achieve its goal of having an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective leader in every school, Louisiana proposed to use its Trailblazer Initiative to support participating LEAs' implementation of the transition to CCSS and to the State's new teacher and leader evaluation system, Compass.<sup>11</sup> In the spring of Year 1 of the Race to the Top grant, the State requested to amend its strategy to support effective teachers and principals. The State requested and was approved to replace the Trailblazer initiative in participating LEAs with Network Support Teams statewide. The Network Support Teams were tasked with building LEA capacity to implement and sustain education reform, with a focus on CCSS and Compass implementation.

In Year 1, the State established five Network Support Teams and grouped LEAs across the State into networks based on common characteristics and needs.<sup>12</sup> Each Network Support Team includes a Network Leader who serves as the primary point of contact for the LEA and for LDOE and provides leadership to the team. The Network Leader is supported by a Deputy Network Leader (who also manages the day-to-day operations of the team), Workflow Management Specialists, Data Specialists and four to six Support Coaches. The Workflow Management Specialists address LEAs' questions and concerns not related to CCSS and Compass implementation, allowing the team to focus on CCSS and Compass implementation. The Data Specialist serves as a liaison between the LEA and the LDOE data group as well as supports LEAs' in their use of data tools and systems related to CCSS and Compass implementation. The Support Coaches, who have varied expertise across grades and subjects, including special education, use an observation and feedback cycle to build capacity of educators and leaders in the LEAs. LEAs worked collaboratively with Network Support Teams in Year 1, using the State-developed process to set priorities and goals for CCSS and Compass implementation and conducted mid- and end-of-year assessments.

In Year 2, the State continued its activity to assure that Network Support Teams were prepared to support LEAs. LDOE collaborated

with the New Teacher Project to support Network Support Team professional development. During Year 2, 10 Network Leader Collaborative trainings were held. Trainings topics included Compass (understanding key reports, challenges and solutions regarding rater accuracy, and how to effectively use the coaching rubric); preparing for Year 2 LEA goal planning meetings; reviewing how Network Support Teams impact quality in LEAs; and improving facilitation skills. The State also assisted Network Support Teams with identifying priorities for statewide collaboration meetings as well as identifying networks' focus for SY 2013-2014.

The State also concentrated efforts in Year 2 on improving communication with LEAs through Network Support Teams and monthly emails to teachers. In addition to weekly calls between LDOE leadership and all five Network Support Team leads, the State added biweekly calls between each of the five Network Support Team leads and the State Superintendent as well as a biweekly group call between Network Support Team leads and the State Superintendent. These weekly calls allowed Network Support Team leads to share timely feedback (concerns, suggestions, and requests for specific resources) from teachers and leaders across the State with leadership as well as allowed Network Support Team leads to hear directly from leadership about policy changes and upcoming events. The State also communicated with Network Support Teams via daily emails. The State believes that this timely exchange of information has made Network Support Teams reliable sources of information and has also enabled them to better support LEAs.

In Year 2, Network Support Teams continued their focus on building LEA capacity in implementing CCSS, using the EAGLE system, and completing and using Compass. Network Support Teams again used the State-developed process to set priorities and goals for SY 2012-2013. Responding to LEAs' request, Network Support Teams began meeting with LEAs in spring 2013 to develop goals for SY 2013-2014. In Year 2, LEA support was targeted and differentiated based on the extent to which LEAs reached their Year 1 goals, milestones identified for Year 2 goals, and the unique needs of the LEA's students, teachers and administrators. During Year 2, Network Support Teams increased their time onsite in schools, conducting

<sup>11</sup> Initially the system was named the Comprehensive Performance Management System (CPMS) and was piloted during school year (SY) 2011-2012. The name was changed to Compass in spring 2012. SY 2012-2013 marked the first year of statewide implementation.

<sup>12</sup> Network Support Teams were temporarily assigned to a network based on the individual and collective areas of expertise of the Network Support Team lead and members. Reassignments were made late in Year 1 based on feedback from LEAs and surveys completed by LEA leadership.



## State Success Factors

observations and providing teachers with immediate feedback for professional development. Network Support Teams also provided a number of districtwide trainings on Compass, EAGLE and using the online toolbox to support CCSS implementation. (See *Using Data Systems to Support Instruction and Standards and Assessments*.)

Beginning in January 2013 through summer of 2013, more than a dozen Network Support Team collaboration meetings were held involving teachers, administrators, and specialists. These cross-district collaboration meetings allowed for LEAs to share best practices, discuss common district challenges, and engage in joint problem solving. During Year 2, Network Support Teams used onsite visits, district collaboration meetings and professional learning communities (PLCs) to discuss best practices, successes, concerns, and challenges, as well as problem solve issues common across LEAs. Discussions focused on key reform activities, CCSS implementation, the transition to Compass, and using EAGLE.

In Year 2, the State surveyed participants after every Network Support Team training event. Surveys were reviewed by LDOE's Office of District Support to adjust trainings or materials developed for LEAs or determine training and resources needed for Network Support Teams. In Year 2, the State also began regular review of stats on the toolboxes; noting trends regarding the pages most frequently accessed, time spent on pages, and resources most downloaded by users. The review determined that users tended to browse resources (browse defined by a short time on a page), but once trainings are conducted on the resource and how to use the resources, download rates increase dramatically.

In Year 1, LDOE established the Educator Leader Cadre.<sup>13</sup> Educator Leader Cadre members were classroom teachers, identified by principals and district leadership to take on extra duties related to CCSS implementation, including providing onsite support to teachers.

Educator Leader Cadre members assisted with reviewing instructional materials and tools for the State's online resource repository for district wide access. In Year 2, Educator Leader Cadre became Teacher Leader Cadre. According to LDOE, the group more than doubled in size to 2,000 teachers and includes at least one representative from every school in the State. Many of the former Educator Leader Cadre members continued as Teacher Leaders. LDOE provided intensive training on Common Core policies and resources for new Teacher Leader Cadre members and the group continued its focus on reviewing and selecting educational tools and materials to be housed in the CCSS teacher and administrator toolboxes and LDOE instituted Teacher Leaders (see *Standards and Assessments*) to become lead CCSS implementation staff at the school level tasked with providing onsite support to teachers.

### Support and accountability for LEAs

LDOE continued the process established in Year 1 for sub-recipient monitoring. During Year 2, an LDOE staff member reviewed LEA progress in implementing their Race to the Top activities quarterly, entering comments, concerns, and other feedback for LEAs in the Indistar System.<sup>14</sup> Indistar includes a coaching function which allows LEAs and consultants to pose and respond to questions. The State believes this function is seen as a value-add for LEAs and not viewed solely as a compliance report. LDOE Grants Management staff also conducts an annual review of all participating LEA's progress as planned via Indistar (reviewing input from both the LEA and the consultants) and LEAs' grant expenditures via the State's e-Grant Management System (EGMS). According to the State, its annual review of Indistar and EGMS reports did not indicate the need for onsite LEA monitoring in Year 2.

<sup>13</sup> In the Year 1 report, this group was referred to as the CCSS Educator Cadre.

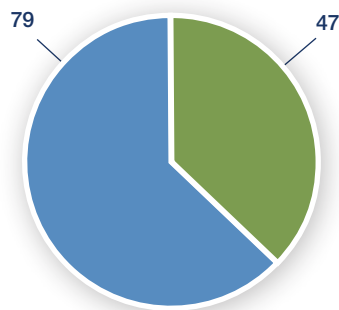
<sup>14</sup> Indistar is the State's web-based grants monitoring system that includes reporting, progress tracking, and other functions that is accessible to all LEAs.

# State Success Factors

## LEA participation

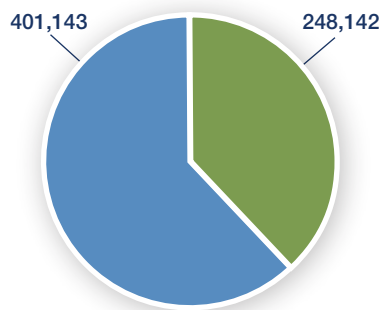
Louisiana reported 47 participating LEAs as of June 30, 2013. This represents 35 percent of the State's kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) students and 37 percent of its students in poverty.

LEAs participating in Louisiana's Race to the Top plan



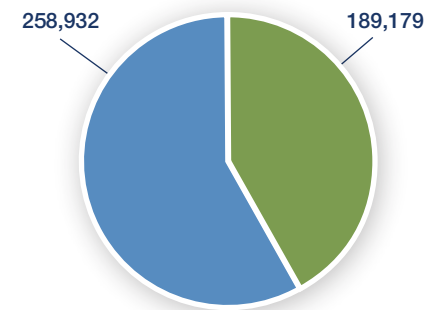
Participating LEAs (#)  
Other LEAs

K-12 students in LEAs participating in Louisiana's Race to the Top plan



K-12 students (#) in participating LEAs  
K-12 students (#) in other LEAs

Students in poverty in LEAs participating in Louisiana's Race to the Top plan



Students in poverty (#) in participating LEAs  
Students in poverty (#) in other LEAs

The number of K-12 students and number of students in poverty statewide are calculated using pre-release data from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) Common Core of Data (CCD). Students in poverty statewide comes from the CCD measure of the number of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch subsidy (commonly used as a proxy for the number of students who are economically disadvantaged in a school) under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National School Lunch Program. The students in poverty statewide count is an aggregation of school-level counts summed to one State-level count. Statistical procedures were applied systematically by CCD to these data to prevent potential disclosure of information about individual students as well as for data quality assurance; consequently State-level counts may differ from those originally reported by the State. Please note that these data are considered to be preliminary as of August 21, 2013.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

In Year 1, implementation of some of the State's Race to the Top activities was delayed because of the need to align the Race to the Top project with the new statewide reform plan, *Louisiana Believes*, replacing the Trailblazer Initiative with the Network Support Teams. According to the State, time invested in Year 1 to assess Network Support Teams (leads and members), review LEA-identified goals, and reassign team leads and members resulted in Network Support Teams becoming stable, reliable, and trusted sources of information and resources for LEAs.

The State cites improved communication with LEAs as one of its successes in Year 2. LEAs confirmed this in an annual survey about Network Support Teams where over 90 percent of respondents cited improved relationship and communication with the State.

Another major success in Year 2 was the State launching its comprehensive online resources. The Teacher Support Toolbox and the District and School Support Toolbox were released in February

2013. The toolboxes provide teachers and leaders with accessible Common Core aligned resources, tools, material and a mailbox for users to submit feedback. Tools to support teachers included: (1) self-led learning modules explaining CCSS; (2) assessment guides and tools that illustrate the shift to CCSS; (3) a bank of CCSS-aligned formative assessment items teachers can use to create classroom specific assessments; (4) sample student learning targets aligned to CCSS; (5) year-long ELA and mathematics CCSS-aligned scope and sequences for K-12 with the first unit plan of each scope and sequence; and (6) a video library to illustrate models of CCSS-aligned instruction. Since the launch in February 2013, LDOE has released new resources monthly.

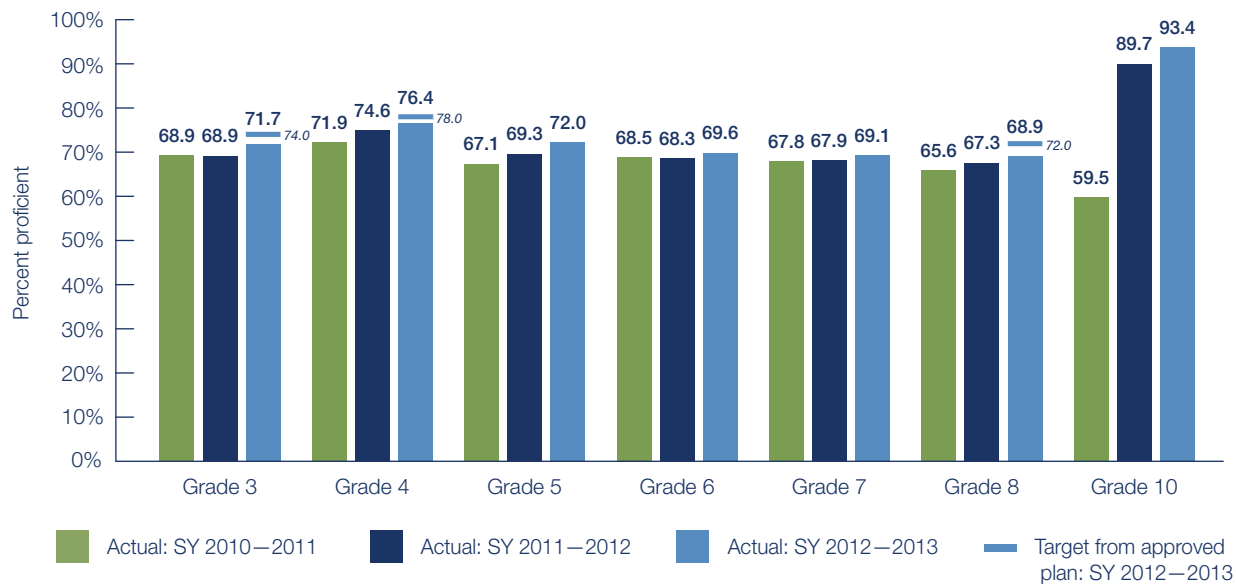
Finally, the State made adjustments to its Race to the Top plan since July 2013 and is adjusting its Scope of Work to reflect these changes. Specifically, the State is identifying key deliverables and milestones to assess progress and assure high quality implementation in Years 3 and 4 of its Race to the Top activities. The State has reported that existing processes and protocols are being used to manage changed grant activities.

# State Success Factors

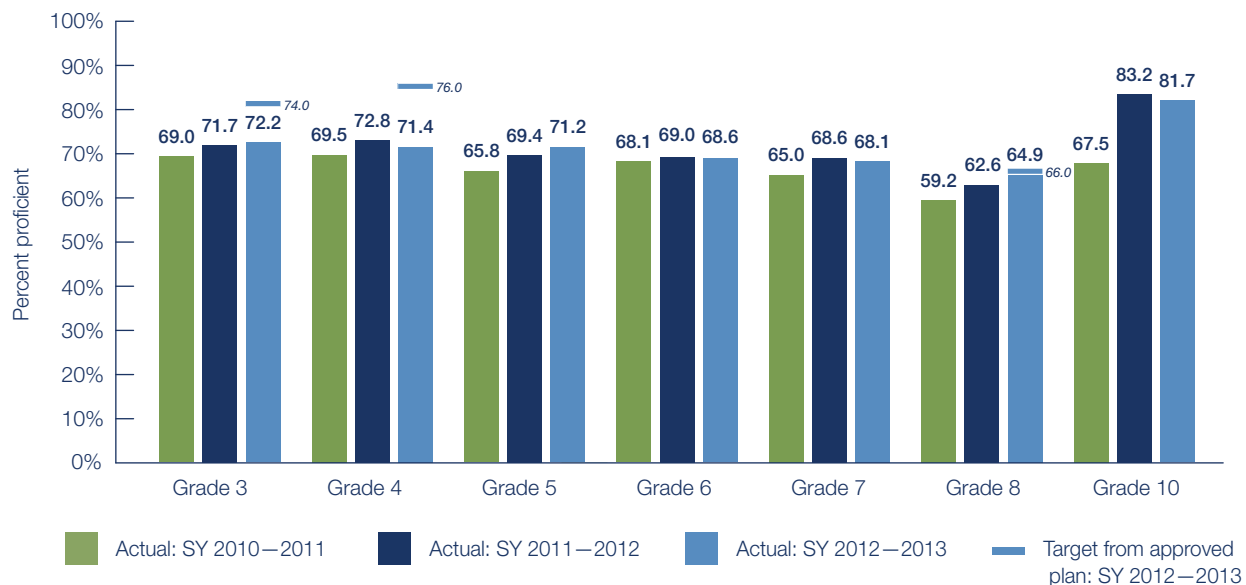
## Student outcomes data

LDOE saw an increase in overall proficiency in ELA across all grades for students in SY 2012-2013 and realized mixed results in mathematics with modest increases only in grades three, five and eight.

Student proficiency on Louisiana's ELA assessment



Student proficiency on Louisiana's mathematics assessment



Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data for the ELA State assessment reported as of: January 29, 2014. Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data for the mathematics State assessment reported as of: December 16, 2013.

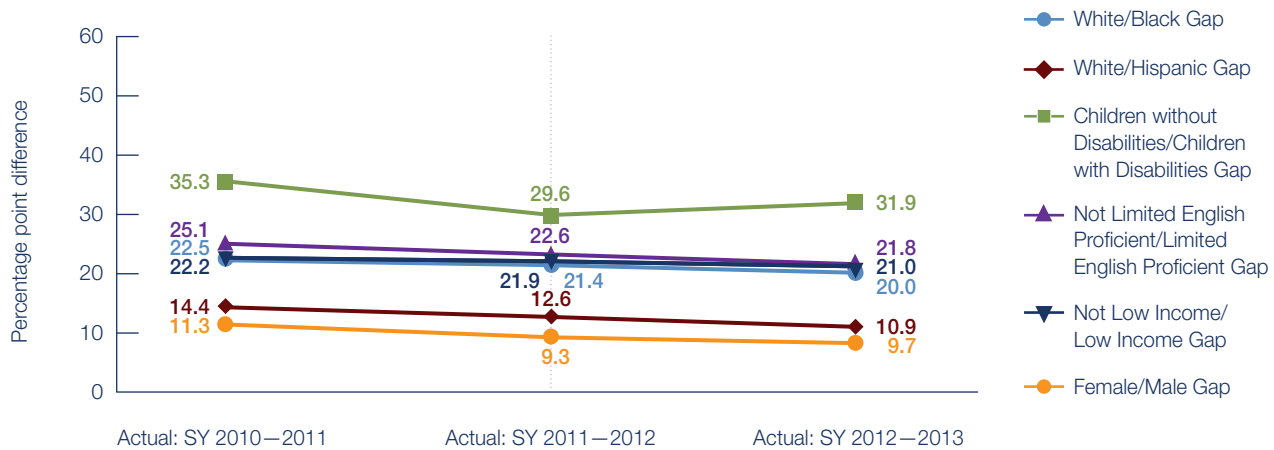
NOTE: Over the last three years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

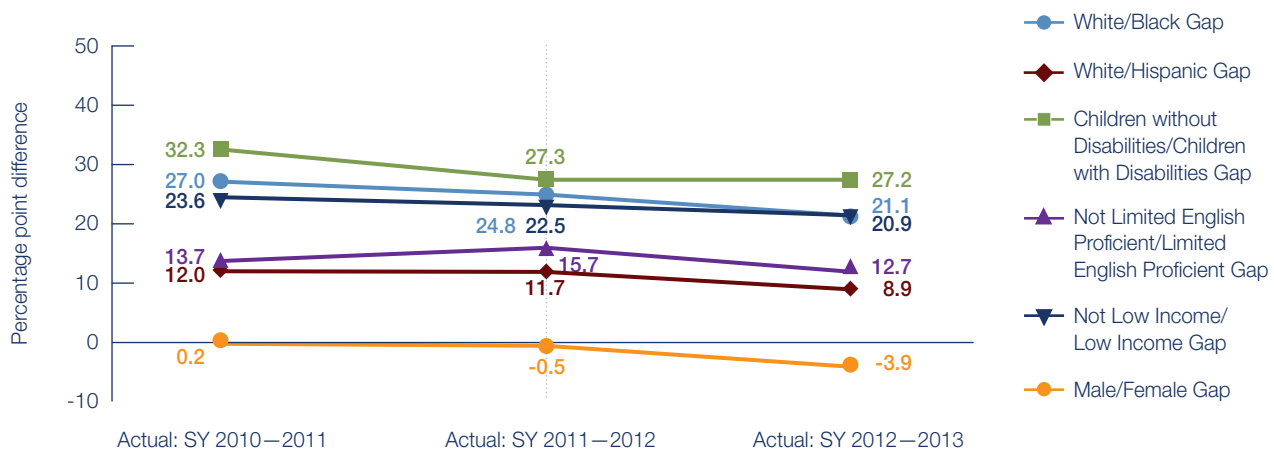
# State Success Factors

The achievement gaps between students with disabilities and children without disabilities grew slightly; the gap between all other sub-groups decreased slightly in ELA. The achievement gap between all sub-groups slightly decreased in SY 2012-2013 for mathematics.

Achievement gap on Louisiana's ELA assessment



Achievement gap on Louisiana's mathematics assessment



Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data for the ELA State assessment reported as of: January 29, 2014. Preliminary SY 2012-2013 data for the mathematics State assessment reported as of: December 16, 2013.

Numbers in the graph represent the gap over three school years between two sub-groups on the State's ELA and mathematics assessments.

Achievement gaps were calculated by subtracting the percent of students scoring proficient in the lower-performing sub-group from the percent of students scoring proficient in the higher-performing sub-group to get the percentage point difference between the proficiency of the two sub-groups.

If the achievement gap narrowed between two sub-groups, the line will slope downward. If the achievement gap increased between two sub-groups, the line will slope upward.

NOTE: Over the last three years, a number of States adopted new assessments and/or cut scores.

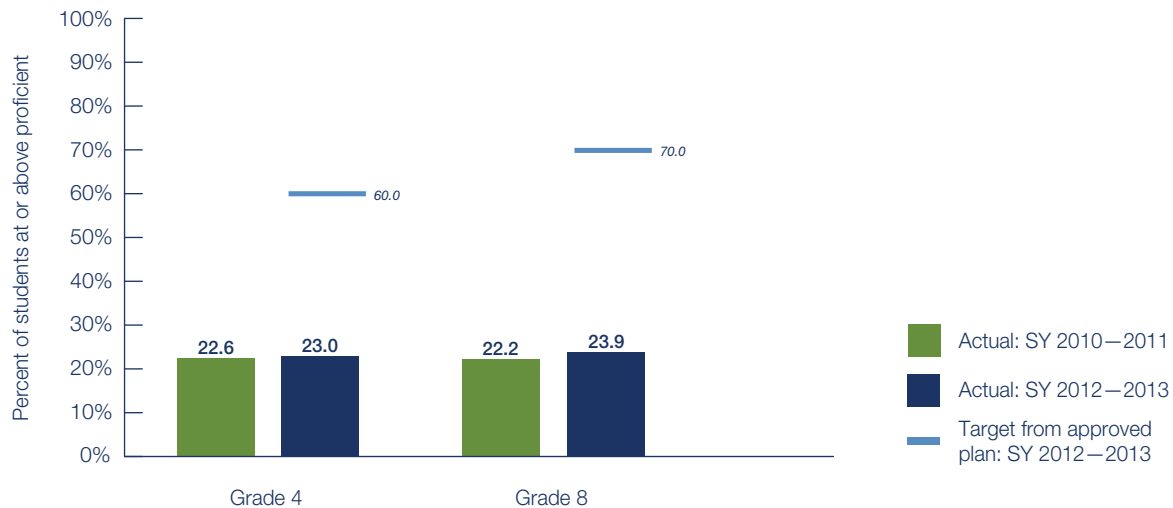
For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).



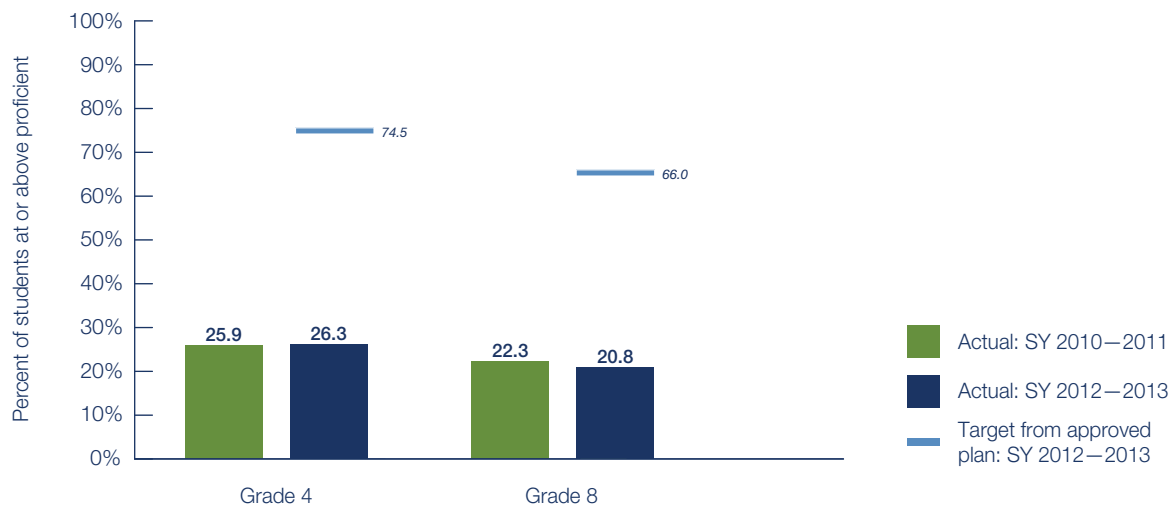
## State Success Factors

The percentage of Louisiana's grade four and grade eight students who were at or above proficient on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in reading in 2013 increased slightly from 2011. The percentage of Louisiana's grade four and grade eight students who were at or above proficient on NAEP in mathematics in 2013 was not significantly different than in 2011.

Student proficiency, NAEP reading



Student proficiency, NAEP mathematics



NAEP is administered once every two years. The two most recent years are SY 2010-2011 and SY 2012-2013. NAEP reading and mathematics results are provided by the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. To learn more about the NAEP data, please visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

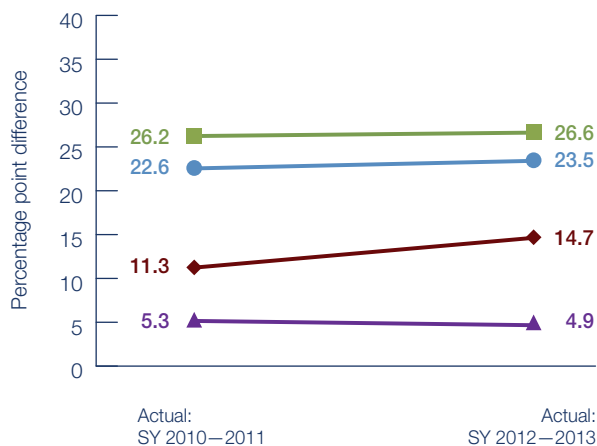
Louisiana's approved Race to the Top plan included targets for NAEP results based on percentages, not based on students' average scale scores.

# State Success Factors

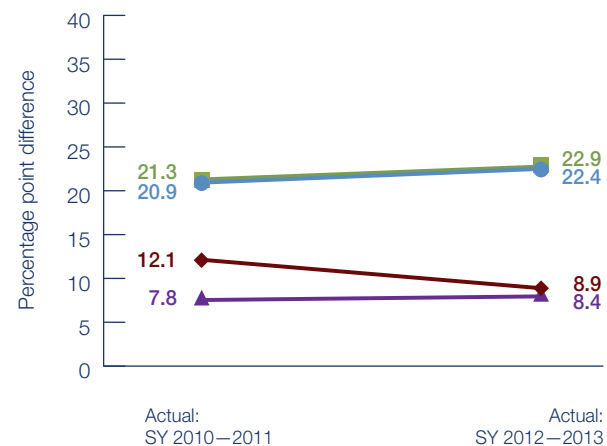
For grade four, NAEP reading gaps increased between white and black students, between white and Hispanic students, and between students not eligible for the national school lunch program and students eligible for the national school lunch program. For grade eight, the NAEP reading gap decreased between white and Hispanic students and between students not eligible for the national school lunch program and students eligible for the national school lunch program. For grade four, NAEP mathematics gaps decreased between white and black students, white and Hispanic students, and students not eligible for the national

school lunch program and students eligible for the national school lunch program. For grade eight, the NAEP mathematics gap increased between white and black students only; the gap decreased between white and Hispanic students and between students not eligible for the national school lunch program and students eligible for the national school lunch program.

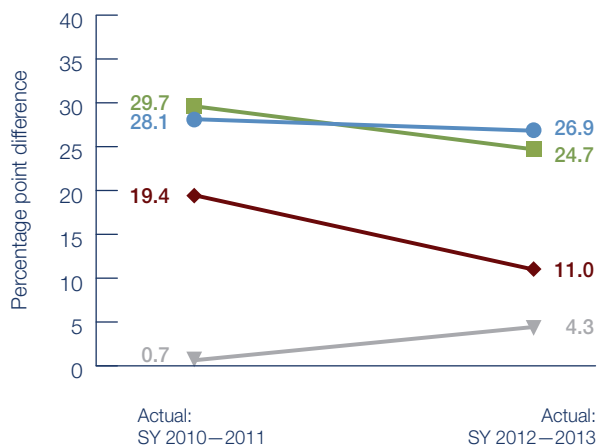
Grade 4 achievement gap on NAEP reading



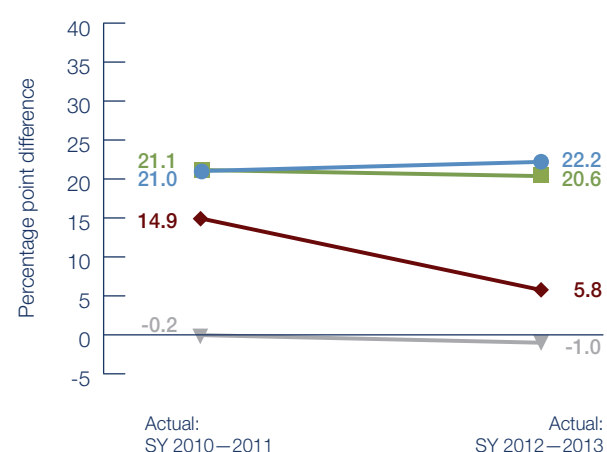
Grade 8 achievement gap on NAEP reading



Grade 4 achievement gap on NAEP mathematics



Grade 8 achievement gap on NAEP mathematics



● White/Black Gap      ▲ Female/Male Gap      ■ Not National School Lunch Program Eligible/National School Lunch Program Eligible  
◆ White/Hispanic Gap      ▼ Male/Female Gap

NAEP is administered once every two years. The two most recent years are SY 2010-2011 and SY 2012-2013. Louisiana's NAEP reading and mathematics results are provided by the Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences. To learn more about the NAEP data, please visit <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>.

Numbers in the graph represent the gap in a school year between two sub-groups on the NAEP reading and NAEP mathematics.

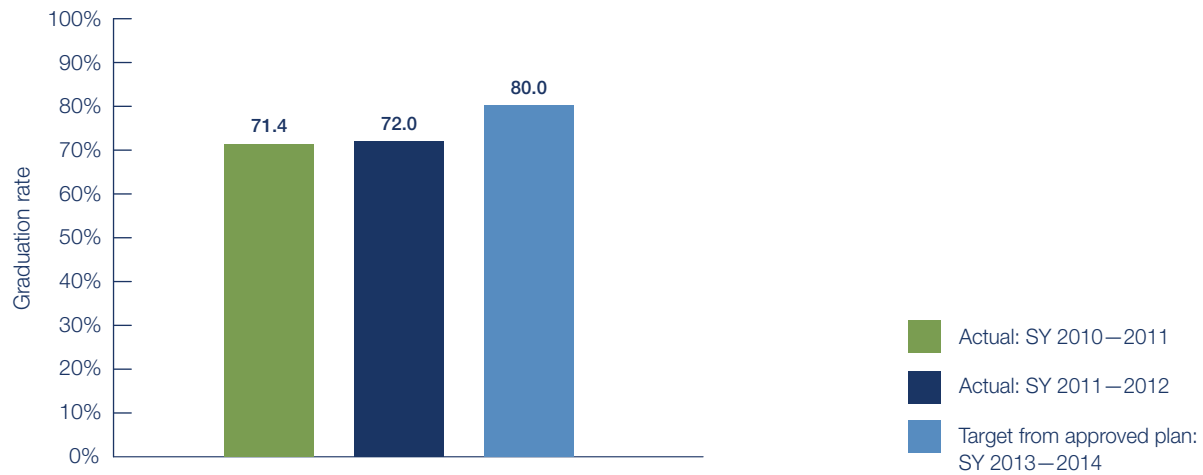
Achievement gaps were calculated by subtracting the percent of students scoring proficient in the lower-performing sub-group from the percent of students scoring proficient in the higher-performing sub-group to get the percentage point difference between the proficiency of the two sub-groups.

If the achievement gap narrowed between two sub-groups, the line will slope downward. If the achievement gap increased between two sub-groups, the line will slope upward.

## State Success Factors

The State's high school graduation rate increased slightly in SY 2012-2013 from SY 2011-2012.

High school graduation rate



Preliminary SY 2011-2012 data reported as of: August 13, 2013.

For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

# Standards and Assessments

Implementing rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and career is an integral aspect of education reform in *Race to the Top States*.

## Supporting the transition to college- and career-ready standards and high-quality assessments

The State uses *Race to the Top* funds to support three key activities in this area: providing professional development to support CCSS implementation; offering additional online AP courses, including AP courses in the STEM fields; and aligning the high school exit criteria and college entrance requirements with CCSS and measuring college- and career-readiness of students.

During Year 1 the State changed its timeline and process for transitioning to CCSS such that all grades would implement CCSS in SY 2012-2013. To support the transition to CCSS, the State provided resources and trainings to teachers and leaders during SY 2011-2012. Although Network Support Teams delivered training to LEA staff on aligning curriculum materials and resources to ELA and mathematics CCSS, available curriculum materials and resources for all subjects and grades were scarce. Furthermore, the State held Common Core Summer Institutes in 2012 for all grades and provided resources to kindergarten and first grade teachers.

Building off of professional development and supports provided in SY 2011-2012, in Year 2 the LDOE and Network Support Teams focused on providing LEAs with a more robust pool of online resources and training. With the launch of the teacher and leader toolboxes, training focused on effectively using toolbox resources across all grades. Network Support Teams prioritized their support to LEAs by focusing on key beginning-of-the-year instructional actions.

To support CCSS implementation within the LEA at the school level, the State developed its Teacher Leader Initiative. In spring of 2013, LDOE launched the Louisiana Teacher Leader initiative, replacing the CCSS Educator Cadre. Every school in the State identified a teacher to serve as its Teacher Leader and lead CCSS implementation. Over 2,000 teachers received training in the spring and summer of 2013 to prepare for their role as the CCSS implementation lead. Network Support Teams will continue to work closely with LEAs to determine how best Teacher Leaders can be used in their schools.

In its ongoing effort to further the goal of ensuring that more students graduate college- and career-ready, *Race to the Top* funds are being used to increase the number of AP courses offered online and in classrooms. The State initially planned to use *Race to the Top* funds to support the development of online AP courses, with a focus on STEM-related AP courses that would be available via the Louisiana Virtual School (LVS).<sup>15</sup> To increase the number of schools offering AP courses, the State planned to support summer

professional development for teachers specific to AP instruction and to provide technical assistance to teachers and administrators with the College Board AP course approval process. During Year 2, the State discontinued LVS, purchased online courses from vendors, and made courses accessible to students via Course Choice. With this change, the State amended its *Race to the Top* plan, eliminating activities related to creating online AP courses. Since LDOE uses other funds to purchase online courses from vendors, funds previously allocated to develop AP online courses have been reallocated to support additional AP professional development.

During the SY 2012-2013, 109 courses were offered through Course Choice, of which 40 were STEM-focused courses. The State closely monitors online course offerings to ensure sufficient AP courses are available. LDOE provided some districts and schools with a customized analysis of their students' ACT scores to inform the selection of teachers to participate in summer institute and the AP course to be added to the school's course offering. Over 400 teachers and leaders participated in a three-day, College Board-authorized summer institute representing 120 schools. At the summer institute teachers drafted a tentative course syllabus and are expected to finalize the course syllabus and complete the College Board course approval process. To support the successful completion of the course approval process, LDOE created a series of webinars on how to complete the College Board course approval process.

To measure progress in aligning the State's end-of-course assessments to CCSS and to measure college and career readiness, the State administered the ACT to all high school students in March 2013 and used *Race to the Top* funds to purchase test materials. LDOE is scheduled to administer the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) beginning in SY 2014-2015.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

While the Department has acknowledged Louisiana's advances in some aspects of students' AP participation, there was mixed success with State's *Race to the Top* performance measures. According to the SY 2012-2013 APR, the State saw increases in the number of students taking AP exams and an increase in the number of students enrolled in STEM-focused AP courses, surpassing targets set for both measures. While the State reported an increase in the number of students enrolled in AP courses in SY 2012-2013 (9,353) from SY 2011-2012 (9,168), it fell short of meeting its target of 10,000 students enrolled in AP courses. Louisiana reported in its SY 2012-2013 APR that only 31 percent of schools statewide offered one or more AP course in SY 2012-2013, falling short of meeting its target of 45 percent for SY 2012-2013 and

<sup>15</sup> LDOE partnered with four State universities to create the Louisiana Virtual School (LVS). LVS offered dual enrollment and Advanced Placement (AP) courses to students in low-population districts where these options, particularly AP courses, are not available.

## Standards and Assessments

losing ground from the previous year when 45 percent of schools offered one or more AP courses. The State also reported fewer students scoring 3 or better on AP exams in SY 2012-2013 than SY 2011-2012.

The State also did not meet targets related to increasing the percent of students meeting ACT college readiness benchmark scores in mathematics or reading. According to the State, for mathematics, only 29 percent of students met the ACT college readiness benchmark score, although the State target for SY 2012-2013 was 40 percent. For reading, only 33 percent of students met the ACT college readiness benchmark score, although the State target for SY 2012-2013 was 50 percent. Despite missing their targets in SY 2012-13, the State remains committed to targets for SY 2013-2014.

While many of the State's activities are on track with its Scope of Work, some projects were not completed on time or as planned. For example, the State reported that it would determine the effectiveness of the AP Summer Institutes for teachers and leaders by conducting follow-up sessions with participants. The State did not conduct the planned follow-up sessions but surveyed participants about the training, in addition to creating listservs of summer training participants for the purpose of providing updates and information on AP policy and professional development opportunities. LDOE reported that survey respondents commented mostly on logistics. It is not clear what additional information a formal follow-up session would have yielded and how that information could have informed decisions regarding Year 2 AP training.

## Data Systems to Support Instruction

Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS) and instructional improvement systems (IIS) enhance the ability of States to effectively manage, use, and analyze education data to support instruction. Race to the Top States are working to ensure that their data systems are accessible to key stakeholders and that the data support educators and decision-makers in their efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement.

### Using data to improve instruction

Louisiana committed to using data to improve instruction prior to receiving Race to the Top funds, and created the EAGLE system. EAGLE's functions include: a formative assessment engine, an assessment item bank (which includes various types of items/questions for first through twelfth grades) and a content assessment reporting system. EAGLE provides teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support to systematically manage continuous instructional improvement. Race to the Top activities include EAGLE training, adding EAGLE items, and enhancing EAGLE reporting. LDOE assures that all EAGLE student data provided to teachers and administrators is in accordance with the State's data privacy policies and the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

In Year 1, the State amended Race to the Top funded EAGLE project activities. The State replaced its plan to develop standard pre- and post-test forms for benchmarking assessments within EAGLE with a plan to expand the EAGLE test item bank and align the existing EAGLE items to the CCSS. This change would allow teachers to develop classroom specific formative assessments, which in turn would provide classroom specific data the teacher could use to inform instructions. The State also believed that the increase in CCSS EAGLE items, across all subjects and grades, would allow teachers in non-tested grades and subjects to measure student growth and achievement. During the first year the State trained over 1,550 district level staff in EAGLE, focusing on how to access and use EAGLE as well as how to

generate EAGLE reports. Using contractual support, the State saw a modest increase in EAGLE items.

In Year 2, the Network Support Teams provided additional training and support to teachers and leaders based on requests from LEAs and on monthly EAGLE usage reports. The State provided extensive EAGLE training to its new Teacher Leaders who will support and encourage EAGLE usage at their schools. In Year 2, the State, with support from teachers and school leaders, significantly increased the number of EAGLE items. The modest increases in Year 1 (36 ELA and 100 mathematics items) were surpassed with an additional 476 ELA items – 404 test bank items and 72 reading passages for grades 3 through 12 —and over 1,000 mathematics items.

The State also completed a number of EAGLE system enhancements and upgrades to improve EAGLE system performance and increase usage by teachers and principals. Upon requests from several LEAs, the State added a reporting function to EAGLE that allows LEAs and schools to aggregate assessment results across classrooms and schools. Other EAGLE enhancements included adding the ability to align multiple items for a single assessment, supporting creation of a two-part, multiple choice item, and providing a text-to-speech functionality for mathematics items. While the added EAGLE items and system enhancements contributed to an increase in the number of formative assessments created in EAGLE in Year 2, usage data from teachers of non-tested grades and subjects was limited because items are primarily in ELA and mathematics.



# Data Systems to Support Instruction

The State developed in Year 1, and continued to use in Year 2, a protocol for reviewing and approving EAGLE test bank items. The review protocol involved LDOE staff checking items to assure alignment to CCSS and verifying that answer keys were accurate. The State continued to use both system usage data and feedback from Network Support Teams to inform needed EAGLE upgrades, resources, and training.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

The State's performance measures related to this project were mixed. The number of tests created by teachers was 144,105 in SY 2012-2013, exceeding the State's target of 110,250. The number of tests completed by students was reported as 1.3 million which is 300,000 less than its

SY 2012-2013 target of 1.6 million and less than the number of tests completed by students in the previous year. The State also did not meet its target for the number of EAGLE logins; the State set a target of 2.2 million statewide logins but reported only 2.1 million logins which was 23,642 fewer logins than in Year 1. According to LDOE, the State has already responded to the challenge of continuously developing high quality EAGLE items across grades and subjects by increasing internal capacity and using Teacher Leaders to develop EAGLE items.

The State has identified the use of job-embedded professional development opportunities during the school day for teachers to reflect on student achievement data and adjust instruction practices based on these data, but it is not clear the extent to which this practice is underway in LEAs.

# Great Teachers and Leaders

Race to the Top States are developing comprehensive systems of educator effectiveness by adopting clear approaches to measuring student growth; designing and implementing rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals; conducting annual evaluations that include timely and constructive feedback; and using evaluation information to inform professional development, compensation, promotion, retention, and tenure decisions. In addition, Race to the Top States are providing high-quality pathways for aspiring teachers and principals, ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals, improving the effectiveness of teacher and principal preparation programs, and providing effective supports to all educators.

## Improving teacher and principal effectiveness based on performance

Louisiana completed the first year of statewide implementation of its new evaluation and support system for teachers and leaders, known as Compass<sup>16</sup> in SY 2012-2013. Compass was preceded by Act 54, the State law that requires that every teacher and leader in Louisiana be evaluated annually and that 50 percent of their evaluations be based on measures of student growth, with the remaining 50 percent based on other qualitative measures of performance. From fall 2012 through spring 2013 the State and Network Support Teams conducted Compass information sessions, trainings, and webinars, and posted information resources to prepare teachers and leaders for statewide implementation in SY 2012-2013. LEAs also received training on the web-based Compass Information System (CIS),<sup>17</sup> an online portal for

Compass through which educators and evaluators can obtain data; engage in collaborative goal-setting and professional growth planning; use observation feedback to inform individualized professional development; and get a final effectiveness assessment.

During SY 2012-2013, the State produced and shared biweekly de-identified Compass completion reports with all districts. These reports were used to prioritize Network Support Team and LDOE support to LEAs. The State established a Compass Inbox for educators to submit questions regarding Compass. The State also provided online videos that demonstrated instruction at different performance levels of the Compass rubric. According to LDOE, these videos helped administrators build observation and feedback skills.

During Year 2, LDOE used contractors to develop additional Compass trainings for teachers, leaders, and counselors on the various Compass

<sup>16</sup> Initially the system was named CPMS and was piloted during SY 2011-2012. The name was changed to Compass in spring 2012. Feedback from the pilot was used to modify the evaluation rubric prior to the SY 2012-2013 statewide implementation.

<sup>17</sup> Though not part of the State's Race to the Top plan, the Compass Information System (CIS) will play an important role in collecting evaluation data on a large scale, vital to implementation of the LEAs' evaluation systems.

# Great Teachers and Leaders

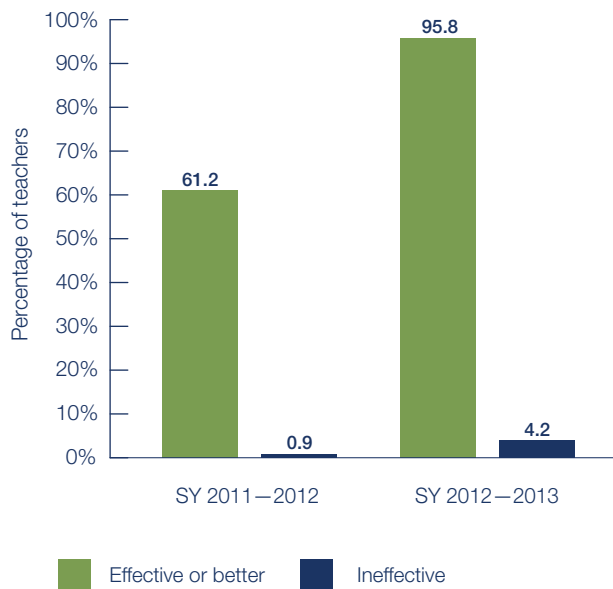
rubrics. Network Support Teams also provided targeted, LEA-specific Compass training on request. Topics ranged from a review of the Compass system to understanding the State's value-added model. Network Support Teams also supported school and LEA leaders' use of CIS reports to monitor its implementation of the evaluation process and conducted weekly calls to discuss Compass issues identified by LEAs, share Compass updates, and review, as available, Compass data provided by the Network Support Team's Data Specialist.

At the close of SY 2012-2013, LDOE, with support from contractors, prepared the 2013 Compass Final Report. The report was posted on the State's website. In its review of the SY 2012-2013 Compass implementation, the State reported:

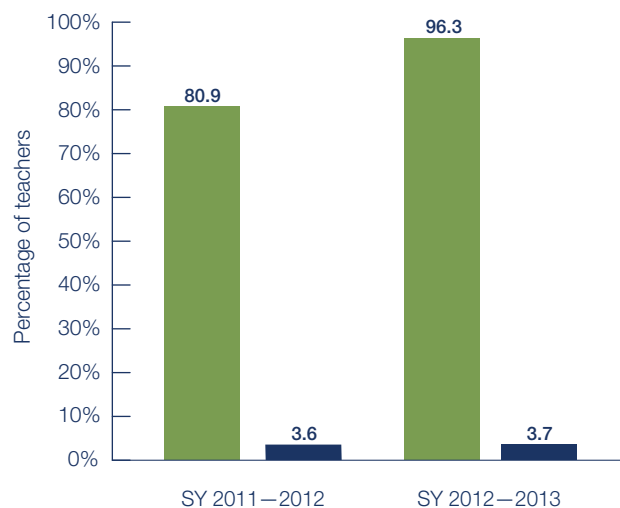
- As a result of using the Compass tool, more Louisiana educators than ever, nearly 100%, set goals and received feedback on their performance;

- Evaluators used the Compass tool to provide educators with individualized information based on multiple measures of performance. As a result, final ratings were more diverse than in past years, spanning four performance levels;
- Statewide, the overall ratings of educators generally corresponded with the academic progress achieved by districts. High-performing districts saw generally high ratings, while districts struggling to make progress had lower ratings; and
- Some districts that achieved high levels of growth used classroom observations to set a particularly high bar for teaching quality, giving educators increased feedback and room to improve. This was particularly evident in districts that made gains with low-income students, implying a link between the rigor of classroom observations and student progress in challenging settings.

Percentage of teachers in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better or ineffective in the prior academic year



Percentage of principals in participating LEAs with qualifying evaluation systems who were evaluated as effective or better or ineffective in the prior academic year



For State-reported context, please refer to the Race to the Top APR at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

# Great Teachers and Leaders

## Ensuring equitable distribution of effective teachers and principals

The State remains committed to creating a strong supply and equitable distribution of effective teachers and leaders and to identifying good teacher prospects, particularly in STEM subjects. The State initially planned to use Race to the Top project funds to provide training to LEAs on effective recruiting, hiring, and placement strategies. Instead, the State requested and received approval to use funds to support the Statewide Staffing Initiative. The Statewide Staffing Initiative was designed to ensure that all students have access to effective teachers and leaders. In Year 1, the State focused its efforts on helping LEAs align staffing policies, performance management requirements, and salary schedules to the requirements of the Act 1 legislation.<sup>18</sup> The State secured a contractor to develop training and resources to support Act 1 implementation and focused on administrators' understanding of Act 1 legislation and compensation requirements. In Year 2, Network Support Teams provided teachers with training and information sessions. Teachers participated in general overview presentations as well as specific panel discussions and conference calls regarding compensation. With compliance of Act 1 implementation and initial Compass data on teacher effectiveness, the State launched the Talent Recruitment Systems in May 2013. This system is designed to help LEAs identify highly effective teachers and leaders when filling vacancies.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Several of the timelines for planned work in Year 1 in this area were adjusted or delayed as the State amended its plan to extend activities from only participating LEAs to all LEAs in the State. The State also made adjustments to the timeline by which measures of student

growth for teachers of non-tested grades and subjects would be refined (that work began in May 2013, instead of summer 2012 as initially planned). LDOE intended to conduct an analysis to support the refinement of these measures following the pilot of the evaluation process and rubric during SY 2011-2012. However, due to the revisions of the evaluation process and rubric after the pilot, LDOE changed its timeline and completed its analysis at the end of SY 2012-2013 and released a final Compass report in September 2013.

As a result of the Compass report and feedback from the field (feedback was generated from multiple audiences and sources including town hall meeting participants, Network Support Teams, and district leaders), the State realized that it will need to increase the level of support provided to evaluators regarding what highly effective instruction that is aligned to Compass and CCSS looks. Accordingly, the State has identified three key activities to address these findings. First, the State plans to expand accountability guidelines for all ratings, especially for those teachers receiving value-added data. The State expects to increase evaluator tools and resources, such as videos exemplars, that may be used for training and norming on observations and feedback expectations. The State also plans to adjust the Compass Leader rubric to more clearly define the characteristics of effective classroom feedback and collaboration sessions for teachers that is grounded in student work and directly aligned to instructional outcomes. Finally, the State expects to release a series of enhancements to the Compass Information System to allow for a more efficient educator observation and feedback process.

The State has realized nearly 100 percent LEA compliance with Act 1 requirements and will begin to support LEAs' analysis and review of Compass data to assure staffing practices are effective and remain compliant with Act 1.

<sup>18</sup> Act 1 allows districts and schools to use measures of teacher effectiveness to guide personnel policies and decisions and calls for teachers to be compensated based on experience, license area, and effectiveness, without decreasing any teacher's salary or affecting retirement. The statute preserves tenure for current teachers, except the small number who earn an "ineffective" rating.

# Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

Race to the Top States are supporting LEAs' implementation of far-reaching reforms to turn around lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of four school intervention models.<sup>19</sup>

## Ensuring successful conditions for high-performing charters

The State reports that it continues to make progress in reform efforts aimed at turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models. The State's Race to the Top strategy is to identify and recruit high-performing Charter Management Organizations (CMOs); match high-performing CMOs with low-performing schools; and provide funding for new charter schools. Once funded, the State provides technical assistance and closely monitors the CMO and charter school during the start-up phase to ensure high-quality implementation and performance.

In Year 1 of the Race to the Top project, the State received 52 responses to its Call for Quality Schools. After review by an independent panel, the State selected 14 applicants as new charter operators, 7 of which were supported by Race to the Top funds.<sup>20</sup> All new State charter schools began operations under the Louisiana Charter School Performance Compact (CSP Compact). The CSP Compact was developed by LDOE in conjunction with charter school leaders, management organizations leaders, and school board members with an objective to "...provide charter school operators and boards with clear expectations, fact-based oversight, and timely feedback while ensuring charter autonomy" (from the CSP Compact). Highlights of the CSP Compact include differentiated school reviews, routine data submission, a three-level intervention ladder, and an annual review of performance ratings presented to school boards, school leaders, and the public.

The newly funded State-authorized charter schools completed a State-designed streamlined pre-opening process. The State created a roadmap with milestones and key dates to monitor schools' progress during the start-up year. With start-up activities completed, the seven charter schools opened as planned at the start of SY 2013-2014.

In Year 2, the State made a request to amend their plan for this area. The State reasoned that in order to be responsive to the high number of applications it received in the 2013 Call for Quality Schools it would need additional funding. Further, the State presented that if

funds allotted for funding new charter schools in Year 3 were made available in Year 2 and if there was no maximum award amount threshold placed on charter school awards, they would have the needed flexibility to award funds to support more new charter schools. (The original Race to the Top budget allotted an award range of \$100,000–\$200,000 for each new charter schools.) The State indicated that additional funds and more flexible funding authority would provide needed increases in the number of high-quality charter schools.

Additionally, the State changed related performance measures by increasing the target number of charter schools for SY 2013-2014 and SY 2014-2015 by 10. While the State exceeded its target for the number of new charter schools in SY 2012-2013 by 14, the State did not increase the number of charter schools funded with Race to the Top funds in Year 2. The State made just three awards: one for over \$1 million (to support four charter schools), a second for \$10,000 (to support a career and technical education focused charter school), and a third award for \$90,337 (to support a single charter school) which totals six new charter schools, one fewer than was funded in Year 1.

## Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

Louisiana reported in its Charter School Annual Report<sup>21</sup> increases in state authorized charter schools' School Performance Scores (SPS). State authorized charter schools experienced a 7.2 percent growth in its SPS while traditional public schools experienced a 4.4 percent growth in SPS. The Department acknowledges gains made by State authorized charter schools but notes that the State reported in the Race to the Top APR for SY 2012-2013 that 67 percent of participating LEAs posted a five percent increase in their SPS. While this represents a gain over last year's performance in which 62 percent of participating LEAs realized a five percent increase in their SPS, the State did not meet its target of 75 percent for SY 2012-2013. The State will continue to support improvements in charter schools performance through technical assistance and support, including using the CSP Compact.

According to LDOE, the CSP Compact provides clear expectations for charter school academic, financial, and organizational outcomes. The CSP Compact has been successful on two fronts: first, it provides

<sup>19</sup> Race to the Top States' plans include supporting their LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

- **Turnaround model:** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- **Restart model:** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
- **School closure:** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.
- **Transformation model:** Implement each of the following strategies: (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness, (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms, (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools, and (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

<sup>20</sup> The State previously reported (in Year 1) the number of new charter schools funded with Race to the Top funds to be six, the correct number is seven, of which six were State approved and once was authorized by the local district.

<sup>21</sup> A complete copy of the report is available at <http://www.louisianabelieves.com/docs/default-source/school-choice/2013-2014-charter-annual-report.pdf?sfvrsn=6>.

# Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

the State with a defined and thorough process for monitoring new charter schools; and second, it provides CMOs with a clear document that explains expectations and sets standards for high-quality, high-performing charter schools. The Department notes that the State is revising its Scope of Work to identify key deliverables and milestones that it will use to assess progress and assure high-quality implementation in Years 3 and 4 for this project.

Specific to the State's focus on turning around the lowest-achieving schools through one of four school intervention models, the State initiated an intervention model of 12 schools in SY 2012-2013, missing the State's target of 30 schools. The State reported four schools initiating the transformation model, three schools initiating the restart model, and five schools initiating the turnaround model. The State will need to determine how best to respond to issues or obstacles that prevented them from reaching their goal in SY 2012-2013 in order to increase the likelihood of meeting next year's target.

## Emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

Race to the Top Phase 3 States are committed to providing a high-quality plan with a rigorous course of study in STEM. In their applications, grantees committed to allocating a meaningful share of their award to advances in STEM education in the State. A focus on STEM furthers the goal of preparing more students for an advanced study in sciences, technology, engineering, and mathematics, including among underrepresented groups such as female students.

### State's STEM initiatives

The State's commitments to implementing a strong STEM curriculum and providing related supports are incorporated in a number of its Race to the Top activities. As previously discussed in this report, STEM advances are represented in the increase in the number of STEM-focused online courses, the number of teachers participating in pre-AP and AP summer training focused on STEM courses; and the number of students taking STEM-focused AP courses (in classrooms and via Course Choice). Finally, with all of the State's LEAs in compliance with Act 1 (developing comprehensive and goal oriented compensation plans that awards teachers for high performance) and a year of Compass evaluation data, the State can move forward with plans to staff the lowest-performing schools with highly effective educators, particularly in STEM subjects.

### Successes, challenges, and lessons learned

The State has invested in statewide STEM education. This investment includes leading the integration of the STEM components of the CCSS and assisting in the delivery of training for revised curriculum. The office faces several challenges in this area. First, LDOE will need to ensure that contractor-developed online courses are of high quality and that the change from LVS to Course Choice has been seamless for students and parents. Next, LDOE will need to be attentive to EAGLE inventory, assuring increased high-quality items for non-tested grades and subjects. Finally, the State will need to focus on meeting its targets recruiting and placing STEM teachers where they are needed most in the State. The State will rely heavily on its Talent Recruitment System which supports districts in filling these high-need subject areas.

## Looking Ahead to Year 3

In Year 3, the State plans to continue to provide guidance and support to the Network Support Teams as the teams assist LEAs with CCSS implementation and PARCC preparation, use Compass data to align professional development to identified needs and gaps, and expand the depth and breadth of EAGLE use. LDOE expects to continue to use feedback from Network Support Teams to identify LEA training and resources needed in Year 3. Network Support Teams plan to continue the goal setting process with LEAs for SY 2014-2015 as well

as identify cross-LEA issues and challenges for PLCs. LDOE plans also to continue with recruitment and training of Teacher Leaders and has set a goal to expand this group by at least one third. The State plans to continue to use CCSS Educator Cadre to assist with EAGLE item development.

The State expects to continue with the development of online resources, materials and tools for teachers and leaders. Materials will focus on evaluation topics, such as value-added data analysis,



# Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools

consistent use of observation rubrics, and using Compass data to inform teacher and leader professional development. Network Support Teams and consultants will be expected to develop tools and resources to support continued capacity building of principals and administrators to implement hiring and staffing practices that ensure equitable distribution of effective teachers and leaders across the State. Finally, the State plans to continue quarterly Compass institutes to address emerging issues common across districts.

In Year 3, the State also plans to continue to increase the availability of high-quality AP courses, especially STEM-focused AP courses, in the classroom and online. LDOE expects to offer AP professional development to teachers and administrators during the summer

of 2014. Those teachers and administrators that have attended AP summer institutes will be expected to complete the College Board AP course audit process and add new AP course(s) to its course offerings. Additionally, LDOE plans to continue monitoring online AP course vendors to assure courses are of high quality and expand the State's AP program by providing courses not offered in classrooms.

With a goal of eliminating the disproportionate number of ineffective teachers in the highest need schools, LDOE plans to monitor LEAs' implementation of Act 1 and provide ongoing support, training, and resources to LEAs in implementing Act 1. Finally, the State plans to use the CSP Compact in its oversight of new charter school start up and initial year operating progress.

## Budget

For the State's expenditures through June 30, 2013, please see the APR Data Display at <http://www.rtt-apr.us>.

For State budget information, see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/state-scope-of-work/index.html>.

For the State's fiscal accountability and oversight report, see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/performance-fiscal-accountability.html>.

# Glossary

**Alternative routes to certification:** Pathways to certification that are authorized under the State's laws or regulations that allow the establishment and operation of teacher and administrator preparation programs in the State, and that have the following characteristics (in addition to standard features such as demonstration of subject-matter mastery, and high-quality instruction in pedagogy and in addressing the needs of all students in the classroom including English learners and students with disabilities): (1) can be provided by various types of qualified providers, including both institutions of higher education and other providers operating independently from institutions of higher education; (2) are selective in accepting candidates; (3) provide supervised, school-based experiences and ongoing support such as effective mentoring and coaching; (4) significantly limit the amount of coursework required or have options to test out of courses; and (5) upon completion, award the same level of certification that traditional preparation programs award upon completion.

**Amendment requests:** In the event that adjustments are needed to a State's approved Race to the Top plan, the grantee must submit an amendment request to the Department for consideration. Such requests may be prompted by an updated assessment of needs in that area, revised cost estimates, lessons learned from prior implementation efforts, or other circumstances. Grantees may propose revisions to goals, activities, timelines, budget, or annual targets, provided that the following conditions are met: the revisions do not result in the grantee's failure to comply with the terms and conditions of this award and the program's statutory and regulatory provisions; the revisions do not change the overall scope and objectives of the approved proposal; and the Department and the grantee mutually agree in writing to the revisions. The Department has sole discretion to determine whether to approve the revisions or modifications. If approved by the Department, a letter with a description of the amendment and any relevant conditions will be sent notifying the grantee of approval. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/amendments/index.html>.)

**America COMPETES Act elements:** The 12 indicators specified in section 6401(e)(2)(D) of the America COMPETES Act are: (1) a unique statewide student identifier that does not permit a student to be individually identified by users of the system; (2) student-level enrollment, demographic, and program participation information; (3) student-level information about the points at which students exit, transfer in, transfer out, drop out, or complete P-16 education programs; (4) the capacity to communicate with higher education data systems; (5) a State data audit system assessing data quality, validity, and reliability; (6) yearly test records of individual students with respect to assessments under section 1111(b) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (20 U.S.C. 6311(b)); (7) information on students not tested by grade and subject; (8) a teacher identifier system with the ability to match teachers to students; (9) student-level transcript information, including information on courses completed and grades earned; (10) student-level college-readiness test scores; (11) information regarding the extent to which students transition successfully from secondary

school to postsecondary education, including whether students enroll in remedial coursework; and (12) other information determined necessary to address alignment and adequate preparation for success in postsecondary education.

**American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA):** On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the ARRA, historic legislation designed to stimulate the economy, support job creation, and invest in critical sectors, including education. The Department of Education received a \$97.4 billion appropriation.

**Annual Performance Report (APR):** Report submitted by each grantee with outcomes to date, performance against the measures established in its application, and other relevant data. The Department uses data included in the APRs to provide Congress and the public with detailed information regarding each State's progress on meeting the goals outlined in its application. The final State APRs are found at [www.rtt-apr.us](http://www.rtt-apr.us).

**College- and career-ready standards:** State-developed standards that build toward college and career readiness by the time students graduate from high school.

**Common Core State Standards (CCSS):** Kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) English language arts and mathematics standards developed in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders including governors, chief State school officers, content experts, teachers, school administrators, and parents. (For additional information, please see <http://www.corestandards.org/>.)

The **education reform areas** for Race to the Top: (1) Standards and Assessments: Adopting rigorous college- and career-ready standards and assessments that prepare students for success in college and career; (2) Data Systems to Support Instruction: Building data systems that measure student success and support educators and decision-makers in their efforts to improve instruction and increase student achievement; (3) Great Teachers and Great Leaders: Recruiting, developing, retaining, and rewarding effective teachers and principals; and (4) Turning Around the Lowest-Achieving Schools: Supporting local educational agencies' (LEAs') implementation of far-reaching reforms to turn around lowest-achieving schools by implementing school intervention models.

**Effective teacher:** A teacher whose students achieve acceptable rates (e.g., at least one grade level in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance.

**High-minority school:** A school designation defined by the State in a manner consistent with its Teacher Equity Plan. The State should provide, in its Race to the Top application, the definition used.

# Glossary

**High-poverty school:** Consistent with section 1111(h)(1)(C)(viii) of the ESEA, a school in the highest quartile of schools in the State with respect to poverty level, using a measure of poverty determined by the State.

**Highly effective teacher:** A teacher whose students achieve high rates (*e.g.*, one and one-half grade levels in an academic year) of student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). States, LEAs, or schools must include multiple measures, provided that teacher effectiveness is evaluated, in significant part, by student growth (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Supplemental measures may include, for example, multiple observation-based assessments of teacher performance or evidence of leadership roles (which may include mentoring or leading professional learning communities) that increase the effectiveness of other teachers in the school or LEA.

**Instructional improvement systems (IIS):** Technology-based tools and other strategies that provide teachers, principals, and administrators with meaningful support and actionable data to systemically manage continuous instructional improvement, including such activities as instructional planning; gathering information (*e.g.*, through formative assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), interim assessments (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements), summative assessments, and looking at student work and other student data); analyzing information with the support of rapid-time (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) reporting; using this information to inform decisions on appropriate next instructional steps; and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken. Such systems promote collaborative problem-solving and action planning; they may also integrate instructional data with student-level data such as attendance, discipline, grades, credit accumulation, and student survey results to provide early warning indicators of a student's risk of educational failure.

**Invitational priorities:** Areas of focus that the Department invited States to address in their Race to the Top applications. Applicants did not earn extra points for addressing these focus areas, but many grantees chose to create and fund activities to advance reforms in these areas.

**Involved LEAs:** LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement those specific portions of the State's plan that necessitate full or nearly-full statewide implementation, such as transitioning to a common set of K-12 standards (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements). Involved LEAs do not receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that it must subgrant to LEAs in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA, but States may provide other funding to involved LEAs under the State's Race to the Top grant in a manner that is consistent with the State's application.

**Participating LEAs:** LEAs that choose to work with the State to implement all or significant portions of the State's Race to the Top plan, as specified in each LEA's agreement with the State. Each participating LEA that receives funding under Title I, Part A will receive a share of the 50 percent of a State's grant award that the State must subgrant to LEAs, based on the LEA's relative share of Title I, Part A allocations in the most recent year at the time of the award, in accordance with section 14006(c) of the ARRA. Any participating LEA that does not receive funding under Title I, Part A (as well as one that does) may receive funding from the State's other 50 percent of the grant award, in accordance with the State's plan.

**The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC):** One of two consortia of States awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematics standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness. (For additional information please see <http://www.parcconline.org/>.)

**Persistently lowest-achieving schools:** As determined by the State, (1) any Title I school in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring or the lowest-achieving five Title I schools in improvement, corrective action, or restructuring in the State, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years; and (2) any secondary school that is eligible for, but does not receive, Title I funds that (a) is among the lowest-achieving five percent of secondary schools or the lowest-achieving five secondary schools in the State that are eligible for, but do not receive, Title I funds, whichever number of schools is greater; or (b) is a high school that has had a graduation rate as defined in 34 CFR 200.19(b) that is less than 60 percent over a number of years. To identify the lowest-achieving schools, a State must take into account both (1) the academic achievement of the "all students" group in a school in terms of proficiency on the State's assessments under section 1111(b)(3) of the ESEA in reading/language arts and mathematics combined; and (2) the school's lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the "all students" group. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.)

**Qualifying evaluation systems:** Educator evaluation systems that meet the following criteria: rigorous, transparent, and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals that: (1) differentiate effectiveness using multiple rating categories that take into account data on student growth as a significant factor, and (2) are designed and developed with teacher and principal involvement.

# Glossary

**Reform Support Network (RSN):** In partnership with the Implementation and Support Unit, the RSN offers collective and individualized technical assistance and resources to grantees of the Race to the Top education reform initiative. The RSN's purpose is to support the Race to the Top grantees as they implement reforms in education policy and practice, learn from each other and build their capacity to sustain these reforms.

The **School Improvement Grants (SIG)** program is authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the ESEA. Funds are awarded to States to help them turn around persistently lowest-achieving schools. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>.)

**School intervention models:** A State's Race to the Top plan describes how it will support its LEAs in turning around the lowest-achieving schools by implementing one of the four school intervention models:

- **Turnaround model:** Replace the principal and rehire no more than 50 percent of the staff and grant the principal sufficient operational flexibility (including in staffing, calendars/time and budgeting) to fully implement a comprehensive approach to substantially improve student outcomes.
- **Restart model:** Convert a school or close and reopen it under a charter school operator, a charter management organization, or an education management organization that has been selected through a rigorous review process.
- **School closure:** Close a school and enroll the students who attended that school in other schools in the district that are higher achieving.
- **Transformation model:** Implement each of the following strategies:
  - (1) replace the principal and take steps to increase teacher and school leader effectiveness,
  - (2) institute comprehensive instructional reforms,
  - (3) increase learning time and create community-oriented schools, and
  - (4) provide operational flexibility and sustained support.

**Single sign-on:** A user authentication process that permits a user to enter one name and password in order to access multiple applications.

The **SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced):** One of two consortia of States awarded grants under the Race to the Top Assessment program to develop next-generation assessment systems that are aligned to common K-12 English language and mathematics standards and that will accurately measure student progress toward college and career readiness. (For additional information please see <http://www.k12.wa.us/SMARTER/default.aspx>.)

The **State Scope of Work:** A detailed document for the State project that reflects the grantee's approved Race to the Top application. The State Scope of Work includes items such as the State's specific goals, activities, timelines, budgets, key personnel, and annual targets for key performance measures. (For additional information please see <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop/state-scope-of-work/index.html>.) Additionally, all participating LEAs are required to submit Scope of Work documents, consistent with State requirements, to the State for its review and approval.

**Statewide longitudinal data systems (SLDS):** Data systems that enhance the ability of States to efficiently and accurately manage, analyze, and use education data, including individual student records. The SLDS help States, districts, schools, educators, and other stakeholders to make data-informed decisions to improve student learning and outcomes, as well as to facilitate research to increase student achievement and close achievement gaps. (For additional information please see [http://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/about\\_SLDS.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/Programs/SLDS/about_SLDS.asp).)

**Student achievement:** For the purposes of this report, student achievement (1) for tested grades and subjects is (a) a student's score on the State's assessments under the ESEA; and, as appropriate, (b) other measures of student learning, such as those described in number (2) of this definition, provided they are rigorous and comparable across classrooms; and (2) for non-tested grades and subjects, alternative measures of student learning and performance such as student scores on pre-tests and end-of-course tests; student performance on English language proficiency assessments; and other measures of student achievement that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

**Student growth:** The change in student achievement (as defined in the Race to the Top requirements) for an individual student between two or more points in time. A State may also include other measures that are rigorous and comparable across classrooms.

**Value-added models (VAMs):** A specific type of growth model based on changes in test scores over time. VAMs are complex statistical models that generally attempt to take into account student or school background characteristics in order to isolate the amount of learning attributable to a specific teacher or school. Teachers or schools that produce more than typical or expected growth are said to "add value."